# City of Damascus Community Atlas



City of Damascus
August 2007

# **City of Damascus Existing Conditions Report / Atlas**

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City of Damascus

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### **FAST FACTS**

Characteristic	Fast Facts
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	
Date of incorporation	November 1, 2004
Population (2006)	9,670
Area within City Limits	
Total Area <sup>1</sup>	10,333 acres (16.15 sq. miles)
Area in tax lots	9,769 acres in 4,654 tax lots
Zoning (2007) <sup>2</sup>	60% rural residential/future urban; 30% agriculture or forest
Socio-economic Charact	teristics
Place of work (2003)	59% Multnomah County; 29% Clackamas County; 8% Washington County; 4% other locations. Few residents live and work in Damascus
Age	Average age is older than Clackamas County, and the population is aging. 43% of residents are over age 45, compared to 37% in Clackamas County. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of people over age 45 in Damascus increased by about 41%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Total area was derived using a City limits boundary in the Metro RLIS GIS dataset, February 2007.

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  Zones are administered by Clackamas County under an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) until Damascus adopts a comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

Characteristic	Fast Facts
Household size and type	Damascus had a slightly larger share of households with children and a slightly larger average household and family size than Clackamas County or the Metro Region. The median household size in Damascus is approximately 3.0; in Clackamas County, it is 2.62 and in Portland it is 2.54. The average family size is more consistent among these geographies: in Damascus it is about 3.1, while in Clackamas County it is 3.07.
Race and Ethnicity	Damascus is less ethnically and racially diverse than Clackamas County or the Portland region. In 2000, 95% of Damascus' residents were white, compared with 91% of Clackamas County residents and 85% of residents of the Portland region. About 2% of Damascus' residents were Hispanic in 2000, compared with 5% of Clackamas County residents and 7% of residents of the Portland area.
Mobility	Residents of Damascus change residences less than residents of Clackamas County and the Portland Region. 69% of residents of Damascus lived in the same house in 2000 as they did in 1995, compared to 52% of Clackamas County residents and 45% of Metro Region residents.
Income	Residents of Damascus had higher income and educational achievement than residents of Clackamas County and the Metro Region. Median income in Damascus in 1999 ranged from \$67,070 to \$72,016, higher than Clackamas County (\$52,080) or the Portland Region (\$47,077).
Education	In 2000 67% of Damascus residents had completed some college, or received an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degree, compared with 65% of Clackamas County residents and 63% of Oregonians.
<b>Housing Characteristics</b>	
Type and Tenure	Damascus had a larger share of single-family homes (96%) than either Clackamas County (67%) or the Portland Region (63%) and a correspondingly smaller share of multi-family and manufactured homes. Owner-occupied residents predominated in Damascus, representing 94% of all housing units compare with 71% in Clackamas County and 63% in the Portland Region.

Characteristic	Fast Facts
Age of housing	Damascus has a relatively large share of newer housing stock. 68% of Damascus' housing was built after 1970, compared with 66% of housing in Clackamas County and 58% of housing in the Portland Region.
Housing cost	Damascus housing had a mean and median sales price of \$383,307 and \$374,900 in 2006, respectively. Housing prices had an annual growth rate of nearly 10% between 2000 and 2006. Housing in Damascus is more expensive than in neighboring cities of Sandy, Milwaukie and Gresham. Only Happy Valley and Lake Oswego have had higher sales prices and growth rates over the period.
<b>Economic Characteristics</b>	
Employment (2005)	1,588
Major industries (2005)	Agriculture and Forestry (409 jobs), Construction (353 jobs), Retail Trade (142 jobs)
Average pay per job	\$24,822
Infrastructure	
Water	Currently served primarily by wells. The Sunrise Water Authority provides municipal water to some households.
Waste water	Current served primarily by septic systems

#### **OVERVIEW**

The Community Atlas provides a "point in time" profile of the City of Damascus. It includes background information, maps, inventories, and other data, that will help inform City policy as well as summarize the existing natural, economic, demographic, and development conditions. The Community Atlas provides an assessment of baseline conditions that will help inform the City's decisions as it develops a comprehensive plan.

Damascus, a rural residential and agricultural community, existed as an unincorporated place within Clackamas County until the area was brought into the Portland Metro Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in December 2002. Metro, the regional government for the Portland metropolitan area, identified 12,200 acres in the Damascus/ Boring and east Happy Valley areas on the southeastern edge of the former urban growth boundary as an area for urban-level development. This area contained about 3,200 households and was partially served with fire and emergency services, and some public water. Public sewer and storm drainage lines were located in the Carver area only. The county sheriff provided police service and Clackamas County provided governance.

Concerns about potential annexation by adjacent cities as well as a desire to shape planning decisions in the area encouraged the people of Damascus to vote to incorporate in 2004 as the City of Damascus. The new City encompasses 10,467 acres of land (about 80% of the Damascus/ Boring and east Happy Valley area brought into the UGB) and had an estimated population of 9,670 in 2006.<sup>3</sup> As Damascus transforms from a rural residential and agricultural area to an urban city, it must undergo a planning process required by Metro and the State of Oregon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 2006, Portland State University Population Research Center

#### **LOCATION AND SETTING**

Damascus is located on Highway 212 southeast of the City of Portland. It is located between Interstate 205 and Highway 26, and is within the Portland Metro the urban growth boundary. Damascus' location has implications for the type and amount of growth in its future.

- Damascus offers access to housing opportunities with a rural character and rural lifestyle options.
- Highway 212 provides access to the Portland region and areas around Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. Highway 212 connects Damascus to Interstate 205, providing easy access to the Portland Metropolitan area, including the Portland International Airport. Highway 212 also connects with Highway 26, giving Damascus access to Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge.
- Damascus has access to workers and markets of the cities of the Portland metro area: it is located
  approximately 15 miles from Portland, as well as about 10 miles from Gresham and other smaller
  metro area cities. The City's proximity to a metropolitan area gives Damascus access to the labor
  force, employment opportunities, and markets of these cities.
- Damascus is located close to major commercial and retail destinations, including Clackamas Town Center. It is roughly a half-hour drive from downtown Portland and has access to Portland's shopping, entertainment, and cultural amenities.

Figure 1 shows photographs of typical scenes in Damascus. These images show the rural nature of the City; most of the parcels in Damascus are low density, comprised of either agricultural, meadowland (top right), or nursery uses (bottom left). Residential uses are similarly low density, with a median parcel size of just over an acre. Damascus has one commercial strip near the intersection of Highway 212 and SE Sunnyside Road (bottom right). The commercial options are limited to a couple of large format retailers, small service establishments, and fast food restaurants.

**Damascus** Established 1851 Incorporated Nov. 2, 2004 DAMASCUS

Figure 1. Photographs of Damascus, 2007

Source: Photos by ECONorthwest.

#### **LAND USE**

Damascus' land use is dominated by rural residential, forest, and agricultural uses. According to Metro, roughly 87% of the total land area within the Damascus city limits (excluding rights-of-way) does not have improvements or structures. By comparison, 51%, 19% and 15% of the total land area is vacant in Happy Valley, Gresham and Oregon City, respectively.

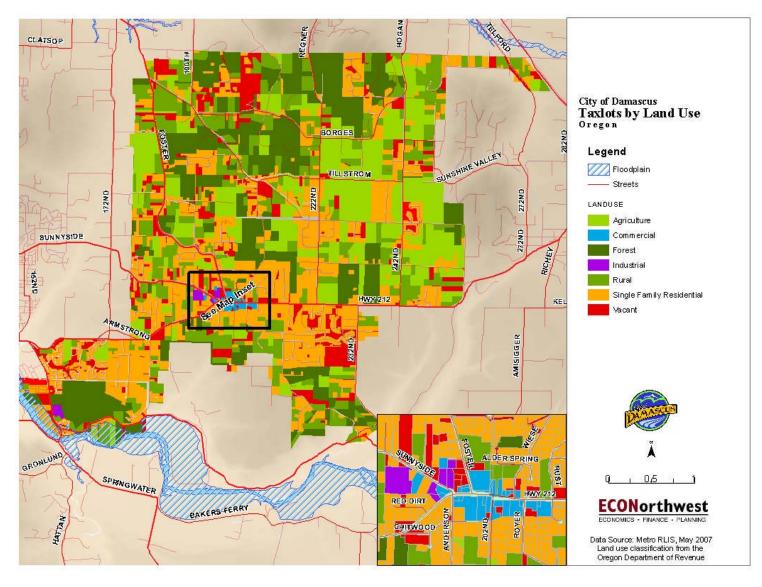
Table 1 and Map 1 show the land uses within Damascus. Damascus has about 9,770 net acres of land (10,467 gross acres) in 4,654 tax lots. About 61% of land within the City is rural plan designations: agriculture, forestry, and general rural. Single-family uses account for 30% of the City's land. Commercial and industrial uses account for less than 1% of Damascus' land uses.

Table 1. Land use by plan designation, net acres, Damascus, 2007

Plan Designation	Taxlots	Total (acres)	Percent of total
Agriculture	274	1,981	20%
Forest	230	2,005	21%
Rural	410	1,952	20%
Commercial	56	41	0%
Industrial	23	28	0%
Single Family Residential	3,113	2,890	30%
Vacant	492	838	9%
Not Classified	56	34	0%
City Limits	4,654	9,769	100%

Source: Metro RLIS, 2007. Calculations by ECONorthwest. Note: For taxlot acreage, only street area is excluded, all other rights-of-way are included. Land use designations are currently administered by Clackamas County and will be changed upon Comprehensive Plan adoption by Damascus.

Map 1. Land use in Damascus, 2007



Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007; map by ECONorthwest

Table 2 shows developed and vacant land in Damascus by zoning district. The majority of Damascus' land is currently zoned for residential or agricultural uses. Roughly 68% of the land relegated to taxlots within the city limits (6,597 acres) is vacant. Two-thirds of the City's land is zoned for Rural Residential or Future Urban use. About 60% (3,877 net aces) is undeveloped. According to Metro, only one dwelling unit per acre is permitted on RRFU land, but these areas are designated for potential future development, meaning that parcel subdivisions or higher density designations may be allowed.

Thirty-percent of Damascus' land (3,004 net acres) is zoned for agriculture or forestry. These lands have been zoned for commercial-scale agricultural production because they have high quality soil for agricultural production or other factors amenable to plant growth. As a result of Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 3, OAR 660-015-0000(3), which gives priority to the preservation of valuable farm and forest land, the areas zoned for agriculture or forestry uses will not be available for development in the near future.

Table 2. Developed and vacant land by zoning district, net acres, Damascus 2007

		Total	Developed		Vacant	
	Taxlots	(Acres)	A	Percent	Acres	Percent
Residential						
Rural Residential or Future Urban	3,500	6,471	2,594	40.1%	3,877	59.9%
Multi-family Residential 1	1	0	0		0	
Single-family Residential 2	64	14	12	85.7%	2	14.3%
Single-family Residential 4	476	139	105	75.5%	34	24.5%
Single-family Residential 5	158	33	20	60.6%	13	39.4%
Industrial and Commercial						
General Commercial	75	49	35	71.4%	14	28.6%
Light Industrial	36	43	22	51.2%	21	48.8%
Other						
Parks and Open Space	2	1	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
Agriculture or Forestry	340	3,004	370	12.3%	2,634	87.7%
City limits	4,652	9,754	3,158	32.4%	6,597	67.6%

Source: Metro RLIS, 2007. Calculations by ECONorthwest.

Note: Vacant land is defined as having no structures or use; paved parking lots are considered developed.

Only the vacant area of partially vacant lots is considered vacant.

CLATSOP Taxlots by Zone City of Damascus BORGES Oregon TILLETROM Legend Floodplain — Streets Zoning SUNNYSIDE Parks and Open Space Agriculture or Forestry Rural Residential or Future Urban HWY 212 General Commercial Light Industrial Multi-family Residential 1 Single-family Residential 2 Single-family Residential 4 Single-family Residential 5 SPRINGWATER BAKERS FERRY RED DIRT Miles **ECONorthwest** HARDING CHITWOOD Data Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007 Local designation boundaries are from local zoning ordinances

Map 2. Zoning designations in Damascus, 2007

Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007; map by ECONorthwest

#### **NATURAL FEATURES**

The City of Damascus is comprised of three basic landforms: the steeper East Buttes/ Boring Lava Domes complex and their immediate slopes, the inter-butte valleys with low to moderate gradient drainages, and the Clackamas River valley characterized by steep valley margins and stream canyons. The Clackamas River and Johnson Creek form the City's major hydrologic basins. Draining south to the Clackamas River are the sub-basins of Deep Creek, Noyer Creek, Richardson Creek and Rock Creek. Draining north to Johnson Creek are Badger Creek, Kelley Creek and Sunshine Creek.

The City recently completed an inventory of Goal 5 natural resources and Goal 7 natural hazards. Goal 5 resources included wetlands, riparian corridors, wildlife habitats, groundwater resources, and Oregon scenic waterways. Goal 7 hazards included geologic and seismic hazards, wildfire, windthrow and flood hazards. Key findings of the study are summarized below.

It should be noted that there are significant areas of overlap between the multiple mapped natural features. In general, the combined area (without overlap) of the key Goal 5 resources relating to buildable lands (*i.e.*, wetlands, riparian corridors and wildlife habitats) is 3,366 acres or approximately 33% of land within Damascus. The approximate combined area of natural hazards is 2,168 acres or 21% of the land within the City. Overall, the approximate combined area of both natural resources and natural hazards is 4,013 acres or 39% of the land in Damascus.<sup>4</sup>

The City's natural features are organized in six categories below. Maps are displayed at the end of this section.

• Wetlands. Twenty-six wetlands were identified within the City, in addition to numerous "possible wetlands" of less than one-half acre in size. Wetlands were evaluated against the state's wetland significance criteria as well as two additional criteria that the Natural Features TST recommended. Twenty-three wetlands were determined to be Locally Significant Wetlands (LSWs). Total area of

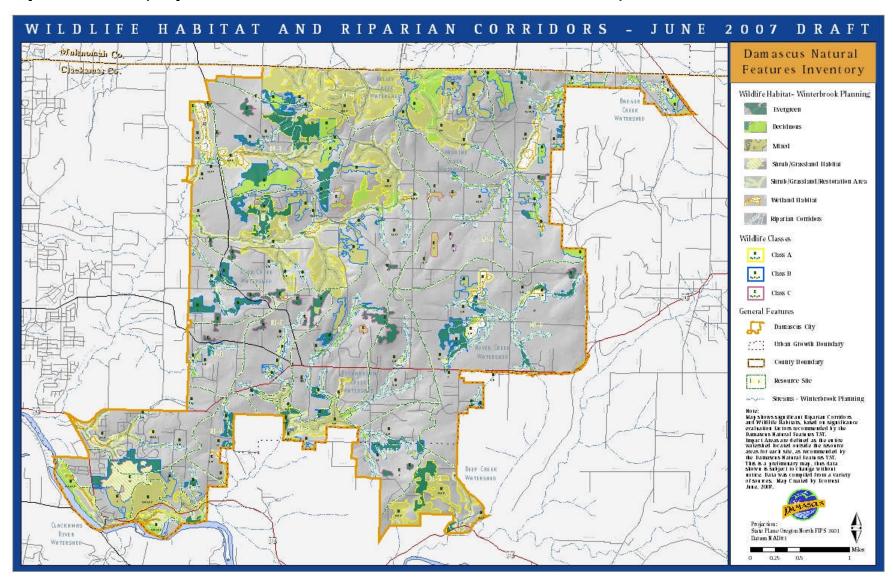
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Acreage figures from Ecotrust.

LSWs is 146 acres or 1.4% of total land within Damascus. Map 3 shows the combination of wetlands, riparian corridors and wildlife habitats within the City.

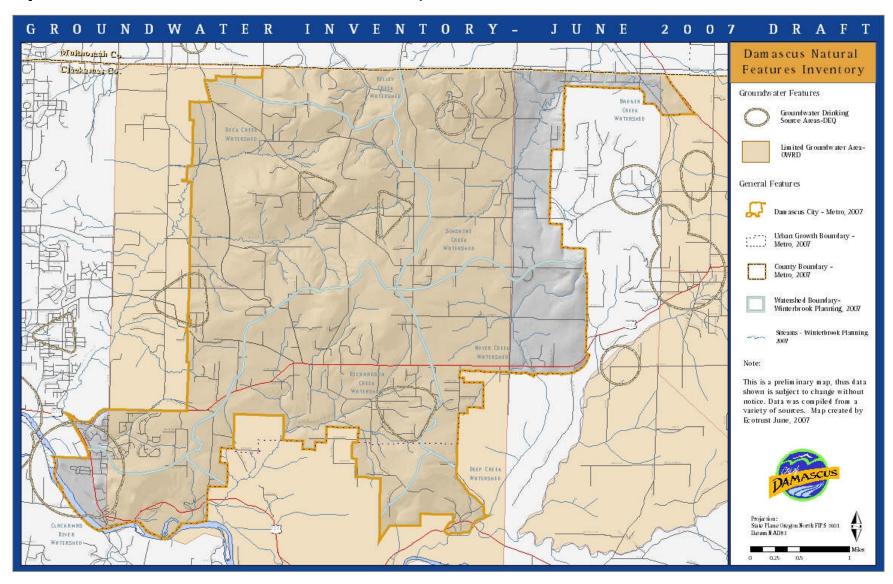
- Riparian Corridors. Twenty riparian sites were identified along streams and rivers. These sites included reaches of Noyer, Richardson and Rock Creeks, which are tributaries to the Clackamas River, and Sunshine, Kelley and Badger Creeks, which are tributaries to Johnson Creek. All streams were deemed significant for the purpose of Goal 5. Total area of significant riparian corridors is 1,674 acres or 15% of land within Damascus.
- Wildlife Habitats. Twenty-one habitat sites were identified within the City. The inventory followed an integrated approach which incorporated wetland, riparian and upland habitats. Significant wildlife habitat includes significant wetlands and riparian corridors, and mapped upland habitats meeting minimum thresholds for size and other factors. Total area of significant wildlife habitat is 3,338 acres or 32% of land within Damascus.
- Groundwater Resources. Groundwater resources were mapped based primarily on information and data from state agencies. Much of Damascus is included in one of the three categories of groundwater that qualifies as significant under Goal 5. This category is the "limited groundwater area" designated by the Oregon Water Resources Commission. The total area of significant groundwater resources (i.e., limited groundwater areas) in Damascus is 8,805 acres or 85% of the City. These areas are not necessarily undevelopable: based upon a study of economic, social, environment, and energy (ESEE) consequences, the local government has authority under Goal 5 to limit or prohibit uses that conflict with resource areas. These areas are shown in Map 4.
- Oregon Scenic Waterway. There is one designated Oregon Scenic Waterway (OSW) within the City. This OSW is the Clackamas River, upstream of the Carver Bridge. The Clackamas River OSW and its "related adjacent land" (land within one-quarter mile) is considered significant under Goal 5. The total area of significant Oregon Scenic Waterway in Damascus is 235 acres or 2% of the City. Development and other conflicting uses may be prohibited or limited in these areas pursuant to the ESEE review conducted by the local jurisdiction. This area is shown in Map 5.

- **Natural Hazards.** Natural hazards evaluated in Damascus include steep slopes, landslides, drainage hazards, wildfire, windthrow, and flood hazards. While the regulations will vary depending on the hazard zone, it is likely that Damascus' codes will limit or restrict development in each of these areas to some extent. These hazards are summarized below and shown on Map 6.
  - **Slopes.** Based on the field inventory, slopes steeper than 25% were assumed to be unstable or potentially unstable. Total steep slope area is 1,030 acres or roughly 10% of land within Damascus.
  - Landslides. Hillsides show evidence of previous landsliding. Total landslide topography area is 1,489 acres or roughly 14% of land within Damascus. Area of rapidly moving landslide is 156 acres or 1.5% of the City.
  - **Drainage.** Based on available data and field observation, high groundwater is expected to be present throughout the wet season. This is especially true for the broad, low-lying valleys between the buttes and north of the Clackamas River and Richardson Creek canyons.
  - Wildfire. Wildfire is influenced by four major factors: fuels, weather, topography and ignition. Total area of significant wildfire hazard is 175 acres or 1.6% of land area within Damascus.
  - Windthrow. Windthrow occurs when trees are snapped or uprooted by high winds. The primary factors contributing to windthrow likelihood are root and stem diseases, saturated soils for prolonged periods, land clearing, and landscape position (ridgetops are generally more prone to windthrow). Most windthrow would come during winter storms where winds are out of the southwest. Broadscale windthrow hazard areas could not be reliably mapped; site-level evaluation should occur at the development stage.
  - **Floodplain.** Flood hazards in the City are documented by FEMA. Total floodplain acreage is 140 acres or 1.3% of land area within Damascus.

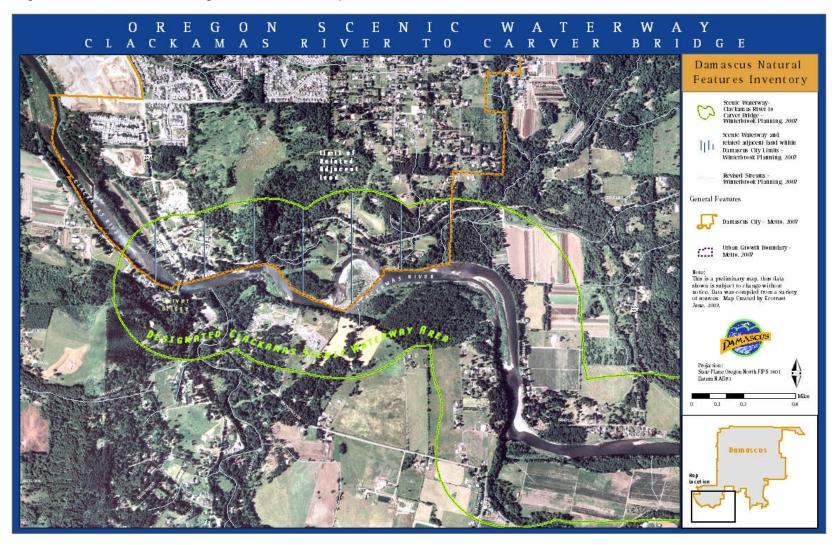
Map 3. Wetlands, Riparian Corridors and Wildlife Habitats in Damascus, 2007



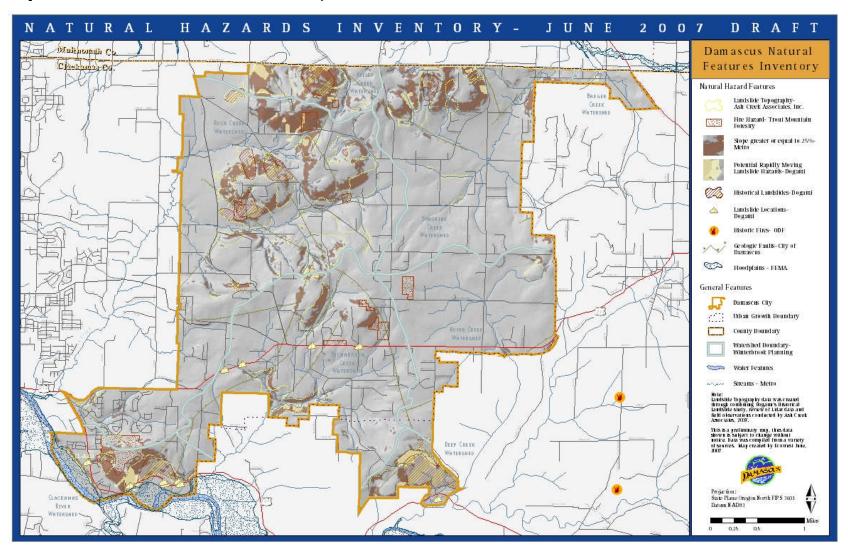
Map 4. Groundwater Limited Areas in Damascus, 2007



Map 5. Scenic Waterways in Damascus, 2007



Map 6. Natural Hazards in Damascus, 2007



#### **TRANSPORTATION**

Damascus' main transportation connection within the Portland Metro region is via Highway 212. Highway 212 connects Damascus with Interstate 205 and Highway 26, providing easy access to Portland, Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge.

Map 7 shows average daily traffic volume for roads in Damascus and surrounding areas.<sup>5</sup> The most traveled road in Damascus is Highway 212. The area with the greatest traffic (22,300 vehicles daily) is the commercial center of the City, where Foster converges with Highway 212.

Other areas that are heavily traveled include the intersection of Highway 212 and Sunnyside Road, used by about 19,000 vehicles per day. The intersection of Highway 212 and Highway 224 is used by about 19,000 vehicles per day. This intersection is near the residential area with the highest density in the City. Traffic volume decreases Highway 212 moves east towards Highway 26 and Sandy. East of Damascus, traffic volume is between 13,000 and 15,000 vehicles per day.

Traffic on all other roads in the City is relatively light; on Borges and Tillstrom Roads, traffic counts are 600 to 1,400 vehicles per day. Clackamas County does not provide traffic volume information for other, smaller roads.

The traffic patterns in Damascus indicate that many people travel through Damascus on Highway 212, en route to Highway 26 or the City of Sandy. However, the data suggest that several thousand vehicles use Highway 212 to get to Damascus' commercial district, rather than simply passing through the City to a destination outside of Damascus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Traffic monitoring information was taken from the Transportation Systems Monitoring Unit of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

FOSTER 162ND Average Daily Traffic Counts CLATSOP 1,400 for Arterial Roads 600 5,300 City of Damascus Oregon KING BORGES SUNSHINE VALLEY Legend TILLSTROM City Limits Floodplain Commerical Center SUNNYSIDE 132ND Streets 15,000 Average Daily Traffic 19,000 HUBBARD 500 - 4,500 ARMSTRONG 13,000 4,500 - 10,300 15,000 10,300 - 15,000 17,000 22,300 15,000 - 16,700 15,000 19,000 16,700 - 22,300 SPRINGWATER CLACKAMAS RIVER BAKERS FERRY **ECONorthwest** ECONOMICS · FINANCE · PLANNING Data Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007

Map 7. Transportation in Damascus, 2007

Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007; Oregon Department of Transportation; map by ECONorthwest

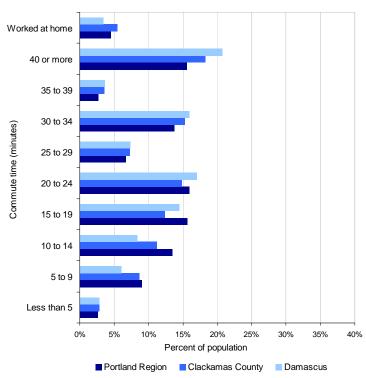
REDLAND

EADEN

ADT Source: ODOT Traffic Counting Program and Clackamas County

Census data show that residents of Damascus have longer commutes than other residents of the Portland area and Clackamas County. Figure 2 provides detail. Forty-four percent of residents of Damascus commute over 30 minutes per day, compared with 43% of residents of Clackamas County and 37% of residents of the Portland Region.

Figure 2. Commute times for residents of the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus, 2000



Source: US Census 2000, percentages by ECONorthwest.

Notes: the Damascus study area is Clackamas County Census 2000 tracts 232.01 and 232.02 block groups 1 and 2, which include all but the easternmost edge of the City.

Table 3 and Figure 3 show where residents of Damascus work. Damascus residents work throughout the Portland metro area, with the largest concentrations in Portland and Gresham. Relatively few residents who live in Damascus also work in Damascus, as shown by the small concentration of workers in the pink outlined area approximating the boundaries of Damascus in Figure 3.

Table 3. Places where residents of the Damascus area work, 2003

Location	Number	Percent
Multnomah County	826	59%
Portland	636	45%
Gresham	146	10%
Clackamas County	406	29%
Oregon City	38	3%
Washington County	116	8%
Tigard	28	2%
All other locations	58	4%
Total	1,406	100%

Source: LED on the map, US Census, 2003

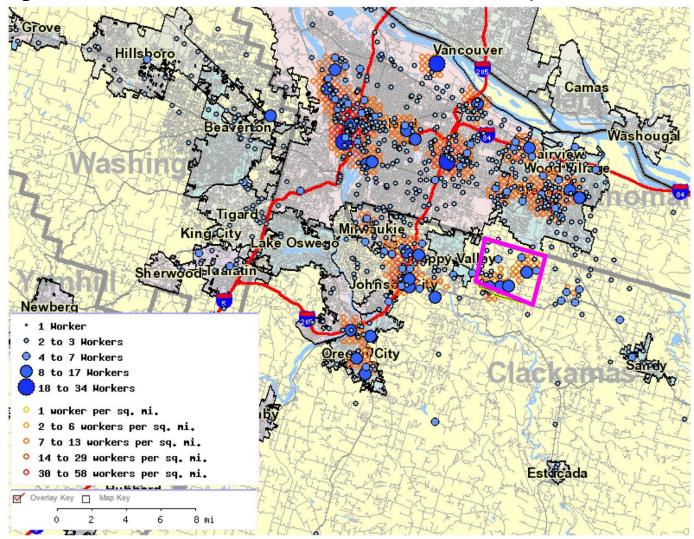


Figure 3. Places where residents of the Damascus area work, 2003

Source: LED on the map, US Census, 2003. Map reconfigured by ECONorthwest.

Notes: The blue dots show where residents of Damascus work. The size of the dot represents concentration of workers: larger dots mean that more Damascus residents are employed at the location. The area outlined in pink is an approximation of the Damascus area.

#### POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Damascus incorporated in 2004. Because the City is newly incorporated, determining population growth trends and demographic trends for Damascus is complicated. The City's incorporation took place after the last decennial census in 2000, which means that the local population characteristics of residents of Damascus are not readily available through the Census. It is possible, however, to develop a rough approximation of the City boundary using Census geographies. This section examines data from a study area that closely approximates the boundaries of the current Damascus city limits. Clackamas County Census 2000 tracts 232.01 and 232.02 block groups 1 and 2 include all but the easternmost edge of the City. The "Damascus study area" is shown in Map 8, south of the City of Gresham and east of the City of Happy Valley.

ROCK'MOOD, BUTWEEDE SWEETBRIAR KERSLAKE GRESHAM [26] City of Damascus GRESHAM Damascus Study Area Census Boundaries City of Damascus LUSTED Oregon Legend BUTLER PLEASANT VALLEY Damascus Study Area Multnomah County amas County Damascus Area Census Tracts RIDGECREST Damascus Area Block Groups 232.01<sub>BORGES</sub> HAPPY VALLEY Damascus City Limits Commercial Center TILLSTROM Floodplain Streets JENNIFER QACKAMA SRIVE 232.02 TICKLE CREEK BAKERSFERRY FORSYTHE OREGON CITY OREGON CITY **ECONorthwest** EADEN Data Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007

Map 8. Census boundaries of Damascus study area, 2000

Source: US Census 2000, map boundaries highlighted by ECONorthwest.

Residents of Damascus have different demographic and economic characteristics than residents of Clackamas County and the Portland Region. Residents of Damascus tend to be older, more affluent, and to have achieved higher levels of educational attainment. Damascus' households tend to be larger and are more likely to include a married couple with children. Census data show that the community has been more stable over time: residents of Damascus were less mobile than residents of Clackamas County or the Portland Region. During the 1990's Damascus' population grew more slowly than Clackamas County or the Portland Region, probably because Damascus lacked urban services and was outside the urban growth boundary.

Table 4 shows population trends for the US, Oregon, Willamette Valley, the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and the Damascus study area. The Willamette Valley and the Portland Region experienced rapid growth during the 1990's, growing at 1.95% and 2.38% respectively. Clackamas County experienced faster growth than the State of Oregon as a whole, at 1.62% compared to 1.30% for the state from 1980 to 2006.

Damascus had a population of 9,670 in 2006, the first and only year for which population estimates for the new City are available.<sup>6</sup> Population trends for the Damascus study area between 1990 and 2000 show relatively slow growth, with an average annual growth rate of 0.21%. This trend is unsurprising given that the area was outside of the urban growth boundary and the urban-level services that support residential development have not been available.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Population Research Center, Portland State University.

Table 4. Population trends for the US, Oregon, Willamette Valley, Portland Region, Clackamas County, and the Damascus study area, 1990-2006

	Population			Cha	nge 1990 to 20	000
Area	1990	2000	2006	Number	Percent	AAGR
U.S.	248,709,873	281,421,906	299,398,484	32,712,033	13%	1.24%
Oregon	2,842,321	3,421,399	3,690,505	579,078	20%	1.87%
Willamette Valley	1,962,816	2,380,606	2,566,295	417,790	21%	1.95%
Portland Region	1,523,741	1,927,881	2,137,565	404,140	27%	2.38%
Clackamas County	278,850	338,391	367,040	59,541	21%	1.95%
Damascus Study Area	6,968	7,117	n/a	149	2%	0.21%

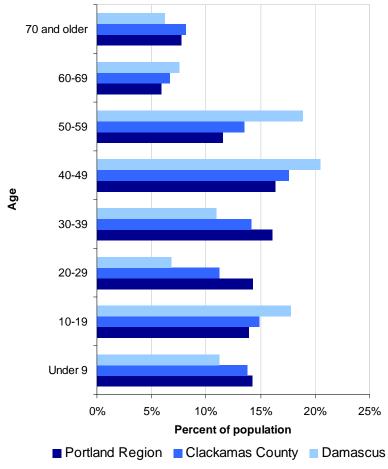
Source: U.S. Census, the Population Research Center at Portland State University

Notes: The Portland Region is the Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton MSA, which includes Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington, and Yamhill Counties in Oregon and Clark and Skamania Counties in Washington. The Damascus study area consists of US Census 2000 Clackamas County Tracts 232.01 and 232.02 block groups 1 and 2.

The Oregon State Office of Economic Analysis projects that Clackamas County's population will grow at a faster pace than the State overall between 2000 and 2040. The state is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.16% over than time period; Clackamas County's population is expected to increase by almost 281,000 people, at an average annual growth rate of 1.54%.

Figure 4 shows the age structure for the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus. Figure 4 shows that Damascus had a larger share of residents between the ages of 40 and 59 (39%), compared with Clackamas County (31%) and the Portland Region (28%). Damascus had a comparatively smaller share of the population over 70 and aged 20-39. Given that the data show age distributions in 2000, however, it is likely that Damascus now has a larger share of population over 70. At the same time, the population aged 10 – 19 has probably decreased as a share of the total population, as this cohort has reached college age and relocated.

Figure 4. Age of residents, Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus, 2000



Source: US Census 2000

Table 5 shows the household type and size for the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus from 2000. Table 5 shows that Damascus had a slightly larger share of households with children and a

slightly larger average household and family size than does Clackamas County or the Portland Region. Of the households with children, Damascus had a larger share of married couples than does Clackamas County or the Portland Region.

Table 5. Household type and size, Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus, 2000

	Portland Region		Clackamas County		Damascus	
Household Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Households with children	239,795	32%	44,522	35%	867	36%
Married couples	176,783	24%	35,145	27%	764	32%
Female householder, no husband present	46,148	6%	6,742	5%	64	3%
Other families	16,864	2%	2,635	2%	39	2%
Households without children	501,981	68%	83,838	65%	1,533	64%
Married couples	201,413	27%	41,642	32%	1,095	46%
Other families	41,132	6%	6,294	5%	108	5%
Nonfamilies	259,436	35%	35,902	28%	330	14%
Total Households	741,776	100%	128,360	100%	2,400	100%
Average Household Size	2.54		2.62		2.90-3.02	
Average Family Size	3.09		3.07		3.08-3.19	

Source: US Census 2000; calculations by ECONorthwest

Damascus is less ethnically and racially diverse than Clackamas County or the Portland region. In 2000, 95% of Damascus' residents reported being white alone, compared with 91% of Clackamas County residents and 85% of residents of the Portland region. About 2% of Damascus' residents were Hispanic in 2000, compared with 5% of Clackamas County residents and 7% of residents of the Portland area.

The Census collects information about migration. Census data show that residents of Damascus were substantially less mobile than residents of Clackamas County and the Portland Region. Table 6 shows that 69% of residents of Damascus lived in the same house in 2000 as they did in 1995. In comparison, 52% of Clackamas County residents and 45% of Portland area residents lived in the same house in 2000 as they did in 1995. The combination of slow growth and lack of mobility mean that the community of Damascus has been comparatively stable over the last decade.

Table 6. Place of residence in 1995 for the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus, 2000

	Portland Region		Clackamas County		Damascus	
Location	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
Population 5 years and older	1,783,873	100%	316,516	100%	6,851	100%
Same house in 1995	811,437	45%	163,895	52%	4,742	69%
Different house in 1995	972,436	55%	152,621	48%	2,109	31%
Same county	480,782	27%	65,830	21%	728	11%
Different county	429,026	24%	80,465	25%	1,346	20%
Same state	184,060	10%	49,042	15%	993	14%
Different state	244,966	14%	31,423	10%	353	5%

Source: US Census 2000; calculations by ECONorthwest

Residents of Damascus had higher income and educational achievement than residents of Clackamas County and the Portland Region. Median income in Damascus in 1999 ranged from \$67,070 to \$72,016, higher than Clackamas County (\$52,080) or the Portland Region (\$47,077). In 2005, Clackamas County continued to have a larger share of the population with higher incomes than the State. Twenty-one percent of Clackamas County residents had incomes over \$100,000 in 2005, compared to 13% of Oregon residents. A larger share of residents of Damascus also had attained higher levels of education in 2000: 67% had completed some college, or received an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degree, compared with 65% of Clackamas County residents and 63% of Oregonians.

# HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Most of the housing in Damascus is comprised of single-family homes on lots of one acre or less; the majority of this housing is located on platted subdivisions. There is one manufactured home park located in the Carver area. Figure 5 shows some of the types of housing located in Damascus. Housing is typically rural in character, with large lot sizes; Damascus has homes on small farming acreages (bottom right), larger upscale homes on large lots (bottom left), ranch style homes (top left), and homes on smaller lots (top right).

Figure 5. Types of housing in Damascus, 2007



Source: ECONorthwest.

Figure 6 shows a typical mix of residential and commercial (farming or nursery) activities that are located in Damascus. Figure 6 shows a variety of types of residential properties in the upper left corner, and the lower portion of the figure shows agricultural activity.

Figure 6. Housing/ commercial activity mix of land uses in Damascus, 2007



Source: Pictures taken by ECONorthwest.

Table 7 shows the type and tenure of housing units in the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus in 2000. Table 7 shows that Damascus had a larger share of single-family homes (96%) than either Clackamas County (67%) or the Portland Region (63%) and a correspondingly smaller share of multifamily and manufactured homes. Table 7 also shows that owner-occupied residents predominated in Damascus, representing 94% of all housing units compare with 71% in Clackamas County and 63% in the Portland Region.

Table 7. Type and tenure of housing units, Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus, 2000

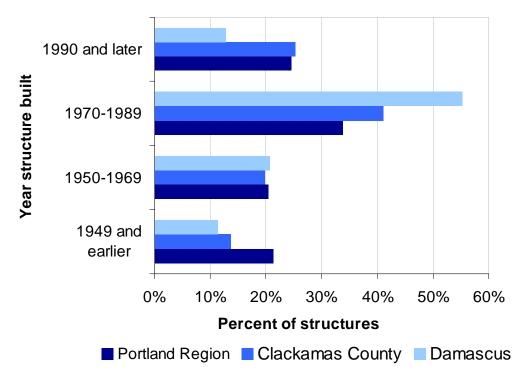
	Portland Region		Clackamas	County	Damascus	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	786,300	100%	136,954	100%	2,449	100%
Single-family	491,898	63%	92,210	67%	2,346	96%
Multifamily	251,949	32%	32,857	24%	16	1%
Manufactured/Mobile	40,301	5%	11,543	8%	80	3%
Occupied Housing Units	741,776	100%	128,201	100%	2,398	100%
Owner Occupied	466,383	63%	91,142	71%	2,262	94%
Renter Occupied	275,393	37%	37,059	29%	136	6%

Source: US Census 2000; calculations by ECONorthwest

Vacancy rates in Damascus were lower than in Clackamas County or the Portland Region. According to Census 2000, only 2% of housing units in Damascus were vacant in 2000, compared with 6% of housing units in Clackamas County and 6% of housing units in the Portland Region.

Damascus has a larger share of newer housing stock than does Clackamas County or the Portland Region. Figure 7 shows the year housing structures were built in the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus based on information from the 2000 Census. Figure 7 shows that 68% of Damascus' housing was built after 1970, compared with 66% of housing in Clackamas County and 58% of housing in the Portland Region. The largest share of housing in Damascus (55%) was built in the 1970s and 1980s.

Figure 7. Year structure built, the Portland Region, Clackamas County, and Damascus, 2000



Source: US Census 2000; calculations by ECONorthwest

Table 8 displays the average and median sales price for single-family residences in Damascus and selected Portland-area cities. Table 8 indicates that Damascus housing had a mean and median sales price of \$383,307 and \$374,900 in 2006, respectively. The prices have had an annual growth rate of nearly 10% between 2000 and 2006. Table 8 shows that housing in Damascus is more expensive than in neighboring cities of Sandy, Milwaukie and Gresham. The annual average growth rate of mean and median sales price has also been higher in Damascus compared to these cities between 2000 and 2007. Only Happy Valley and Lake Oswego have had higher sales prices and growth rates over the period.

The median sales price in Damascus is almost \$50,000 higher than in Clackamas County, but has been growing at almost exactly the same rate. Between 2000 and 2006, prices have increased roughly 75% in the two areas.

Annual sales price growth has been quite high in Damascus and the entire Portland Metro Region in recent years. This trend is indicative of the rising demand for land and housing throughout the area and a strong housing market throughout the United States.

Table 8. Average and median sales price for single-family dwellings, Damascus and selected cities in the Portland Metro Region, 2000 to 2007

_	Sales Price							Change 2000 to 2006		
Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Number	Percent	AAGR
Damascus										
Mean	\$222,476	\$213,290	\$233,434	\$245,222	\$268,202	\$321,078	\$383,307	\$160,831	72%	9.5%
Median	212,900	205,000	226,000	233,000	257,371	319,580	374,900	\$162,000	76%	9.9%
Gresham										
Mean	174,780	170,100	180,604	209,595	205,147	236,343	271,441	\$96,661	55%	7.6%
Median	164,500	163,267	169,000	178,225	188,709	215,500	247,500	\$83,000	50%	7.0%
Happy Valley										
Mean	225,347	249,468	269,651	293,489	376,410	540,403	522,671	\$297,324	132%	15.1%
Median	216,750	235,458	255,700	265,391	328,960	405,574	489,900	\$273,150	126%	14.6%
Sandy										
Mean	146,258	164,990	179,930	172,848	186,612	215,149	240,069	\$93,811	64%	8.6%
Median	147,500	150,500	157,098	163,555	180,000	205,000	232,725	\$85,225	58%	7.9%
Lake Oswego										
Mean	343,413	355,683	388,125	386,803	448,644	523,119	609,919	\$266,507	78%	10.0%
Median	282,750	285,000	302,000	333,250	377,000	430,000	525,000	\$242,250	86%	10.9%
Milwalkie										
Mean	166,752	168,505	167,912	187,205	203,115	228,099	269,219	\$102,467	61%	8.3%
Median	153,200	156,900	162,000	174,346	185,450	219,950	250,000	\$96,800	63%	8.5%
Clackamas County										
Mean	234,549	235,656	250,025	261,983	307,440	361,080	404,030	\$169,481	72%	9.5%
Median	185,000	190,395	199,500	214,000	240,000	278,000	325,000	\$140,000	76%	9.8%

Source: Metro RLIS (local assessor data). Calculated by ECONorthwest.

While the median sales price of housing in Damascus is higher than that of Clackamas County, the average residential density is much lower. According to local assessor data, the average density of housing in Damascus is .93 dwelling units per gross acre (including most rights-of-way). The average residential density in Clackamas County is 2.05 dwelling units per gross acre. Compared to Clackamas County, Damascus has fewer, more expensive homes on larger parcels.

The Carver area, located in the south western part of the City, has the highest residential density in Damascus. Housing developments in this area reach a density of roughly 2.4 dwelling units per gross acre.

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## **EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

Determining if there are any industry concentrations or clusters within the City relative to the larger region helps to measure the economic relationship between the two areas. Based on the concentration of employment for each sector relative to the Portland metropolitan area, the following sectors are highly concentrated in Damascus: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Construction; Education; and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. Agriculture and Construction have especially large concentrations compared to the Portland metro area; this is due in part to the lack of agricultural uses throughout much of the rest of the Portland region, as well as the number of nurseries and similar businesses that are located in Damascus.

Damascus' economy is different from the Portland region as a whole; in the Portland region, the industries with the greatest numbers of employees (in 2006, the most recent data available) were: Manufacturing, Government, Retail, and Health and Social Assistance. Employment is these industries accounted for 52% of all employees in the Portland metro area. In comparison, in Damascus (in 2005, the most recent data available), those same industries—with the addition of the professional and technical services sector—accounted for only 21% of employment.

### **Jobs**

Table 9 shows employment by sector for the City of Damascus, as well as the average pay per employee for each sector. Table 9 shows that the sectors with the largest number of employees in Damascus are agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; construction; retail; and administrative. All other sectors have fewer than 100 employees.

Table 9. Employment by sector for the City of Damascus, 2005

	Establish-	Employ-		Average
Sector/Industry	ments	ment	Payroll	Pay/Emp.
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	10	409	\$ 9,232,552	\$ 22,573
Construction	104	353	\$ 11,356,741	\$ 32,172
Manufacturing	12	87	\$ 2,352,380	\$ 27,039
Wholesale Trade	20	32	\$ 1,653,502	\$ 51,672
Retail Trade	14	142	\$ 3,119,291	\$ 21,967
Transportation and Warehousing	5	9	\$ 221,020	\$ 24,558
Finance and Insurance	9	24	\$ 902,012	\$ 37,584
Real Estate	15	32	\$ 791,847	\$ 24,745
Administrative & Support Srv and Waste Mgt	23	101	\$ 2,107,120	\$ 20,863
Private Educational Services	4	81	\$ 1,533,990	\$ 18,938
Health Care and Social Assistance	9	31	\$ 797,549	\$ 25,727
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4	50	\$ 199,113	\$ 3,982
Accomodation and Food Services	11	82	\$ 923,949	\$ 11,268
Other Services	29	74	\$ 1,059,054	\$ 14,312
Government and Professional & Scientific Srv.	24	81	3,166,688	\$ 39,095
Total	293	1,588	\$ 39,416,808	\$ 24,822

 $Source: Oregon\ Department\ of\ Employment,\ calculations\ by\ ECON orthwest.$ 

Figure 8 shows a comparison of employment and average pay per employee by sector in 2005. The average pay per employee in Damascus was \$24,822. Agriculture had the greatest share of employment and slightly below average pay per employee. Construction was also a large employer in Damascus and had above average pay per employees. Most other sectors had average or below average wages, except for Government and Professional and Scientific services, which had the highest pay per employee.

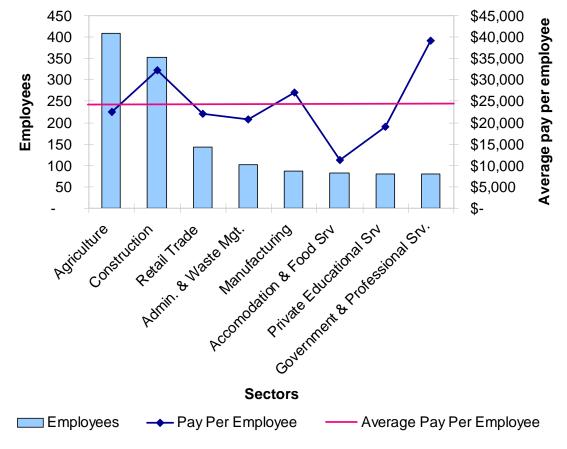


Figure 8. Employment and pay by sector, Damascus, 2005

Source: Oregon Department of Employment, calculations by ECONorthwest.

Map 9 shows places of employment in Damascus by industrial sector, according to the Oregon Employment Department. Employment is concentrated in three major areas: the Highway 212 and Sunnyside Road intersection, near the residential subdivisions and the intersection of Highway 224, and Springwater Road in the south west portion of the City.

Places of Employment by Industrial Sector City of Damascus Oregon BORGES Legend Floodplain TILLSTROM City Limits Streets 2-Digit NAICS Sector \*Dot size represents relative number of employees SUNNYSIDE Agriculture, Foresty, Fishing Construction Manufacturing 152NO Wholesale Trade Retail Trade HWY 212 Information and Finance Real Estate and Rental Leasing Professional and Technical Services Admin, Support and Waste Services Educational Services Health Care and Social Assistance Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Accommodation and Food Services Other Services SPRINGWATER BAKERS FERRY HWY 212 Miles **ECONorthwest** Data Sovice: Metro RLIS, May 2007 Employment Data: O ego i Employment Department Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Map 9. Employment centers in Damascus, 2007

Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007; Oregon Department of Employment; map by ECONorthwest

Map 9 shows all of the employers in Damascus with more than four employees. While employment is distributed throughout the entire city, there are only two major employment centers. One is located on Tillstrom, between 222<sup>nd</sup> and 242<sup>nd</sup> Avenues. Much of the City's agriculture, forestry and fishing employment is located in this area. These firms are not served by major transportation routes. However, according to Figure 1, these firms employ local workers and commute times should not be largely adversely affected by their location.

Another area for employment, shown in the Map 9 inset, is on Highway 212, near its intersection with Highway 224 and Foster Road. Almost all of the City's retail and wholesale trade, manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and administrative services jobs are located in this area. These businesses are served by major transportation connectors, including Highways 212 and 224, and Foster Road. Much of the remaining employment in Damascus is comprised of small firms, primarily operating in the construction sector.

Most of the 34 retail and wholesale employers are located near the intersection of Highway 212 and Sunnyside Road. Some are located near the residential subdivisions in the south west part of the City. These firms employ an average of roughly 5 people. Four of the 11 food and accommodation services enterprises are located at the Highway 212 and Sunnyside Road intersection. Four more are located at the intersection of Highway 224 and Springwater Road. These firms employ an average of seven people.

Smaller firms, usually employing less than 5 people are scattered uniformly across the rest of Damascus. Many of these are probably in-home businesses. This pattern is shown in Map 10.

Places of Employment City of Damascus Oregon BORGES Legend City Limits Floodplain - Streets SUNNYSIDE Place of Employment 162ND ALDER SPRING SPRINGWATER BAKERS FERRY RED DIRT Miles **ECONorthwest** CHITWOOD Data Sovice: Metro RLIS, May 20107 Employment Data: O lego i Employment Department Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Map 10. All employers in Damascus, 2007

Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007; Oregon Department of Employment; map by ECONorthwest.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Public infrastructure in Damascus – stormwater, wastewater, sewer, roads, etc. – has been designed to serve a rural population. Upgrading and maintaining these services will be critical to support the new residential and commercial development expected in the City in the coming decades.

### **Wastewater**

Wastewater treatment in Clackamas County is provided both by cities that own and operate their own collection services (such as Milwaukie and Oregon City) as well as by special service districts that own and operate collection (such as Clackamas County and Happy Valley). There are three special service districts that serve parts of Clackamas County: the Tri City Service District, Clackamas County SD (CCSD) No. 1 and Oak Lodge Service District (see Map 11 below). There have been several recent efforts to better coordinate and possibly consolidate wastewater service in the County, including the Kellogg, Oak Lodge, Tryon Creek, and Tri City study, the Urban Services Agreement study, and the Joint Wastewater Treatment Options Report. The result of these studies was a recommendation in 2005 to consolidate County wastewater collection for treatment at the Tri Cities plant. In 2006, the regional sewer plan was rescinded and the Citizen Advisory Council created a new plan for interim improvements for the Tri City and Kellogg Creek plants and the construction of a new plan on an undetermined site. Site selection for this new plant is currently underway. Meanwhile, the Tri City area, as well as the City of Happy Valley and the Oak Lodge Service District area are undergoing master planning processes.

STARK HAWTHORNE POWELL Damascus Area Wastewater Providers City of Damascus Oregon TACOMA Legend City Limits 26 Floodplain -----Streets SUNNYSIDE **Sewer Districts** Clackamas Co. Service Dist. #1 212 Dunthorpe-Riverdale Sewer Dist. Oak Lodge 2 Sanitary Dist. #5 Tri-City Service Dist. #4 224 Miles ECONorthwest ECONOMICS · FINANCE · PLANNING Data Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007

Map 11. Damascus area wastewater providers

Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007; map by ECONorthwest.

Regardless of where the treatment plant will be situated, the County will be experiencing growth in the demand for wastewater treatment services as planned growth in Damascus and Happy Valley occurs. Currently, the County plans to direct new flows from expected growth in these areas to the Tri City plant or the new treatment plant. The Damascus City Council is still in the process of determining how wastewater treatment for the newly established City will function; a 2005 study by URS concluded that building a Damascus treatment plant would neither be practical nor cost effective, privatization of the wastewater treatment system is unlikely to occur, and the City should most likely partner with one of the special districts or Cities that currently provide wastewater services to parts of the County. Partnership opportunities include (but are not limited to):

- Clackamas County WES CCSD No. 1 or Tri Cities
- City of Gresham and/ or Troutdale
- City of Happy Valley
- Boring Area
- Sunrise Water Authority

In 1998, Clackamas County WES CCSD No. 1 trunk lines and smaller sanitary pipes were placed near the intersection of Highways 212 and 224, located in the southwest portion of the City. In the area with the highest density residential development in Damascus, these sewer lines currently serve roughly 700 housing units. Sewer lines have also been placed to the south, in the Carver area. These lines serve two mobile home parks. Further, a few households are served by two inch Boring wastewater pipes on the eastern edge of the City.

 $<sup>^7</sup>$  Sewer line data from Clackamas County WES CCSD No. 1 GIS files. Household estimate calculated by ECONorthwest using WES and Metro RLIS assessor data.

Significant technical work still needs to be completed, including master planning for the City of Damascus that would address environmental stewardship issues and coordination with water supply, communications, and other infrastructure development. Continued debate about partnership and ownership options will affect the pace of the technical work. The City Council is committed to exploring partnership options and technical opportunities, as well as continuing to partner in regional discussions.

### Water

Similar to the provision of wastewater services, water service delivery is provided by a variety of entities throughout the County, and the City of Damascus is in the process of evaluating partnership opportunities (see Map 12). As development continues, the need for additional water service will grow. As outlined in the Concept Plan, the proposed town center is remote from existing service options. Similar to the wastewater treatment options, obtaining new water rights for the City of Damascus is unlikely, but there are several partnership opportunities and the City is currently making ownership and operations decisions.

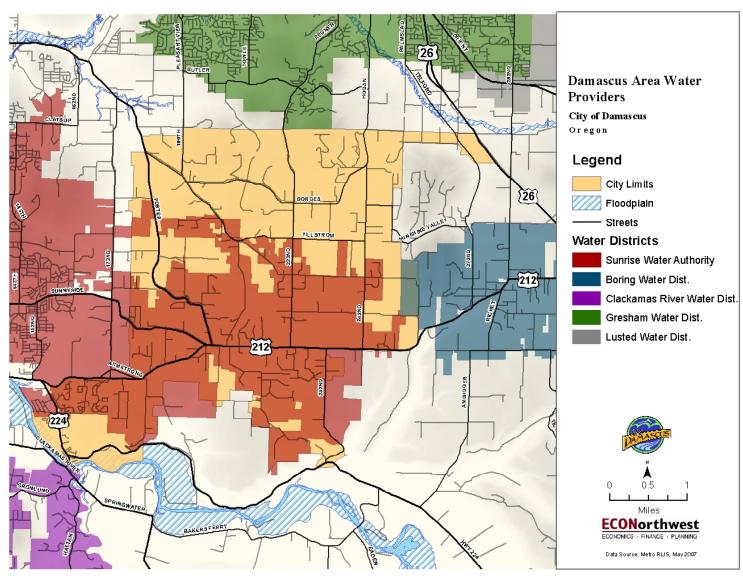
Previous studies have evaluated water service in the Damascus area, including the Sunrise Water Authority Reclaimed Water Plan, the Sunrise Water Authority Water System Master Plan in 2004, and the City of Damascus Water Options conducted by URS in 2005. Additional technical work, however, is still necessary, including master planning for the City of Damascus, coordination with wastewater treatment and other infrastructure provision; ownership and partnership decisions will affect the technical work. Potential partnership opportunities include (but are not limited to):

- Sunrise Water Authority
- City of Gresham
- Portland Water Bureau
- Boring Water District
- Clackamas River Water
- Partial ownership by the City of Damascus

Currently, the City does receive limited service from the Sunrise Water Authority. This water is purchased from the North Clackamas County Water Commission. About 80% of that water originates in the Clackamas River and is treated by the Authority. The remaining 20% originates in wells.

The City of Damascus is currently exploring options for both water and wastewater services provision.

Map 12. Damascus area water providers



Source: Metro RLIS, May 2007; map by ECONorthwest.